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Sustainable development and international economic cooperation: implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

Report of the Second Committee*

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I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 99 (see A/53/587, para. 2). Action on sub-item (f) was taken at the 42nd and 49th meetings, on 18 November and 14 December 1999. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/54/SR.42 and 49).

II. Consideration of proposals

A. Draft resolutions A/C.2/54/L.39 and A/C.2/54/L.73

2. At the 42nd meeting, on 18 November, the representative of Guyana, on behalf of the States Members of the United Nations that are members of the Group of 77 and China, introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s" (A/C.2/54/L.39), which read:

"*The General Assembly,*

"*Recalling* its resolution 52/187 of 18 December 1997, in which it decided to convene the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at a high level in the year 2001, as well as its resolution 53/182 of 15 December 1998,

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in nine parts, under the symbol A/53/587 and Add.1-8.

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"*Noting* the progress made in the preparatory process for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,

"*Taking note* of the Ministerial declaration on the South Summit adopted at the twenty-third annual meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77, held in New York on 24 September 1999, and the Declaration adopted by the Ninth Annual Ministerial Meeting of Least Developed Countries, held in New York on 29 September 1999,

"1. *Decides* that the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries will be held in Brussels;

"2. *Also decides* that the meeting of the intergovernmental preparatory committee envisaged in paragraph 4 of its resolution 53/182 will be organized in New York in two parts, in the third quarter of 2000 and the first quarter of 2001, each for five working days;

"3. *Further decides* that the Secretary-General of the Conference will organize the three expert-level preparatory meetings provided in paragraph 4 of its resolution 53/182 at venues and for durations deemed most appropriate in consultation with Member States;

"4. *Requests* the Secretary-General of the Conference to organize regional-level preparatory events in collaboration with the regional commissions and other relevant regional and subregional organizations;

"5. *Reiterates* its request to the Secretary-General of the Conference, in consultation with Member States and in cooperation with relevant organizations and agencies, to organize well-focused sectoral, thematic and country-specific round-table meetings, as appropriate, during the Conference to contribute to the work of the Conference;

"6. *Again emphasizes* the importance of country-level preparation;

"7. *Notes with appreciation* in this regard the initiative of the European Union to collaborate in the country-level preparations through the assistance of its representatives in the least developed countries and calls upon the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and all other relevant bodies and agencies of the United Nations system to provide support to country-level preparations through their field offices in the least developed countries;

"8. *Urges* the organizations involved in the implementation of the integrated initiatives for the least developed countries' trade development to intensify their support for the efforts to substantially enhance export supply capacity of the least developed countries, and requests the Secretary-General of the Conference to submit progress reports thereon at the intergovernmental preparatory committee meetings and the Conference itself;

"9. *Calls upon* the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank to link the forthcoming round-table and consultative group meetings to the country-level preparatory process of the Conference, and to ensure that these meetings make substantive contributions to the Conference;

"10. *Requests* the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, in his capacity as Convener of the United Nations Development Group, to ensure the full involvement of United Nations resident coordinators and country

teams in the least developed countries in the preparations for the Conference, particularly at the country level;

"11. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General of the United Nations, in consultation with the Secretary-General of the Conference, to convene inter-agency meetings, as necessary, to ensure the full mobilization and coordination of all relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, as well as other relevant institutions, for the purpose of carrying out preparation for and follow-up to the Conference;

"12. *Invites* the Secretary-General of the Conference to make arrangements, on the basis of consultations with Member States, to facilitate the involvement of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in the preparatory process and the Conference and in its follow-up;

"13. *Requests* the Secretary-General of the United Nations, with the assistance of concerned organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, including the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, to take the necessary measures to intensify their public information efforts and other appropriate initiatives so as to enhance public awareness in favour of the Conference, including by highlighting its objectives and its significance;

"14. *Decides* to defray the cost of participation of two government representatives from each least developed country in the intergovernmental preparatory committee meetings and the Conference itself through the use of unspent balances arising from the programme budget of the United Nations for the biennium 1998-1999;

"15. *Requests* the Secretary-General of the United Nations to make arrangements for substantially strengthening the capacity of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Africa and the Least Developed Countries of the Secretariat through providing sufficient staff and necessary resources, with a view to enabling it to organize the Conference effectively and efficiently and to follow up its outcome while carrying out adequately its mandates relating to the least developed, the landlocked and the small island developing countries;

"16. *Also requests* the Secretary-General of the United Nations to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the state of preparations for the Conference taking into account the consideration of the matter by the Trade and Development Board at its forty-seventh session;

"17. *Decides* that the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s will continue to provide the framework for national and international action for the least developed countries until the adoption by the Conference of the next programme of action, and in this regard requests the Secretary-General to continue to give high priority to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s on a system-wide basis and in the context of the follow-up of all major United Nations conferences and summits as well as in all forthcoming events, including the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the event of a high-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development and its preparatory process, and the Millennium Assembly;

"18. *Also decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session the item entitled 'Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries'."

3. At the 49th meeting, on 14 December, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Alexandru Niculescu (Romania), introduced a draft resolution entitled "Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s" (A/C.2/54/L.73), submitted on the basis of informal consultations held on draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.39.

4. The Committee had before it a statement of the programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.73, submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly (A/C.2/54/L.74).

5. At the same meeting, the Chairman also read out a statement in connection with the programme budget implications of the draft resolution (see A/C.2/54/SR.49).

6. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.73 (see para. 9).

7. In the light of the adoption of draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.73, draft resolution A/C.2/54/L.39 was withdrawn by its sponsors.

B. Draft decision proposed by the Chairman

8. At its 49th meeting, on 14 December, on the proposal of the Chairman, the Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that it take note of the report of the Secretary-General on the state of preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (A/54/271) and the report of the Secretary-General on implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s (A/54/269 and Corr.1) (see para. 10).

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

9. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 52/187 of 18 December 1997, in which it decided to convene the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries at a high level in 2001, as well as its resolution 53/182 of 15 December 1998,

Noting the progress made in the preparatory process for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,

Taking note of the Ministerial Declaration and Ministerial Statement on the South Summit adopted at the twenty-third annual meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Group of 77,[1] held in New York on 24 September 1999, and the Declaration adopted by the Ninth Annual Ministerial Meeting of the Least Developed Countries,[2] held in New York on 29 September 1999,

[1] A/54/432, annexes I and II.

[2] A/C.2/54/3, annex.

1. *Recalls* that the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries will convene in 2001, welcomes the offer of the European Union to host the Conference in Brussels, and decides to accept the offer;

2. *Decides* that the meeting of the intergovernmental preparatory committee envisaged in paragraph 4 of its resolution 53/182 will be held in New York in two parts, in the third quarter of 2000 and the first quarter of 2001, each for five working days;

3. *Also decides* that the Secretary-General of the Conference will organize the three expert-level preparatory meetings provided for in paragraph 4 of its resolution 53/182 at the venues and for the durations deemed most appropriate in consultation with Member States;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General of the Conference to organize regional-level preparatory events in collaboration with the regional commissions and other relevant regional and subregional organizations, as appropriate;

5. *Reiterates* its request to the Secretary-General of the Conference, in consultation with Member States and in cooperation with relevant organizations and agencies, to organize well-focused sectoral, thematic and country-specific round-table meetings, as appropriate, during the Conference to contribute to its work;

6. *Emphasizes* the importance of country-level preparations;

7. *Notes with appreciation*, in this regard, the initiative of the European Union to assist the least developed countries in their preparations at the country level through the assistance of their representatives in those countries, invites the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme and all other relevant bodies and agencies of the United Nations system to provide support to country-level preparations through their field offices in the least developed countries, and calls upon the development partners to support this preparatory process;

8. *Urges* the organizations involved in the implementation of the Integrated Framework for Trade-related Technical Assistance, including for Human and Institutional Capacity-building, to Support Least Developed Countries in Their Trade and Trade-related Activities to intensify their support for efforts to assist those countries in enhancing their export supply capacity and trade opportunities and to integrate them into the multilateral trading system, and requests the Secretary-General of the Conference to ensure that information on progress in the implementation of the Integrated Framework is included in the reports submitted to the preparatory committee and to the Conference itself;

9. *Calls upon* the least developed countries, together with their development partners, in particular the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, as appropriate, to link the forthcoming round-table and consultative group meetings to the country-level preparatory process for the Conference and to ensure that those meetings make substantive contributions to the Conference;

10. *Requests* the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, in his capacity as convenor of the United Nations Development Group, to ensure the full involvement of United Nations resident coordinators and country teams in the least developed countries in the preparations for the Conference, in particular at the country level;

11. *Calls upon* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Secretary-General of the Conference, to convene inter-agency meetings, as necessary, to ensure the full mobilization and coordination of all relevant organs, organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, as well as other relevant institutions, for the purpose of carrying out preparations for and providing follow-up to the Conference;

12. *Invites* the Secretary-General of the Conference to make arrangements, on the basis of consultations with Member States, to facilitate the broad-based involvement of civil society, including non-governmental organizations and the private sector, in the preparatory process and in the Conference and its follow-up;

13. *Requests* the Secretary-General, with the assistance of concerned organizations and bodies of the United Nations system, including the Department of Public Information of the Secretariat, to take the necessary measures to intensify their public information efforts and other appropriate initiatives to enhance public awareness in favour of the Conference, including by highlighting its objectives and significance;

14. *Decides* to defray the cost of participation of two government representatives from each least developed country in the meetings of the preparatory committee and the Conference itself through the use of extrabudgetary resources, and in the event that those resources prove to be insufficient, requests the Secretary-General to consider all other options, including the use of unspent balances from the regular budget for the biennium 1996-1997 as an exceptional measure;

15. *Calls upon* donor countries to provide financial support for the participation of the least developed countries in both the preparatory process and the conference itself, and welcomes efforts already made to that effect;

16. *Requests* the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and Member States, to make the necessary arrangements, through redeployment and the use of other resources at their disposal, for the substantial strengthening of the Office of the Special Coordinator for Least Developed, Landlocked and Island Developing Countries, through the provision of sufficient staff and resources, with a view to enabling it to organize effectively and efficiently the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and the follow-up to its outcome, while satisfactorily carrying out its mandates relating to the least developed, landlocked and small island developing countries;

17. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to submit a report to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session on the state of preparations for the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, taking into account the consideration of the matter at the forty-seventh session of the Trade and Development Board;

18. *Decides* that the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s will continue to provide the framework for national and international action for the least developed countries until the adoption of the next programme of action at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, and requests the Secretary-General to continue to give high priority to the implementation of the present and future programmes of action for the least developed countries on a system-wide basis and in the context of the follow-up to all major United Nations conferences and summits as well as all forthcoming events, including the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the high-level international intergovernmental consideration of financing for development, including the preparatory process, and the Millennium Assembly;

19. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session an item entitled "Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries".

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10. The Second Committee also recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft decision:

Documents relating to the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s

The General Assembly takes note of the following reports:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the state of preparations for the Third United Nations on the Least Developed Countries;[3]

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s.[4]

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[3] A/54/271.

[4] A/54/269 and Corr.1.